

## *Letter from the Editor*

Improving human–wildlife interactions by resolving human–wildlife conflicts



**THIS WINTER ISSUE** of *Human–Wildlife Interactions* (HWI) featuring human–bear conflicts is the sixth issue we have published in partnership with the open access portal known as Digital Commons. Our web address is <https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/hwi>.

Digital Commons, in addition to providing an easy portal for online submissions, has increased the number of submissions HWI receives, expedited the review and decision process, and thus enabled us to reduce the time from author submission to publication. To accommodate the increased number of submissions, we now publish 3 issues per year. We are also exploring an option to provide our authors with instantaneous online publication, once their manuscript has been accepted and approved for publication.

*Human–Wildlife Interactions* exists to serve the professional needs of the wildlife biologist and manager in the arena of human–wildlife conflicts/interactions, wildlife damage management, and contemporary wildlife management. The intent of HWI is to publish original contributions on all aspects of contemporary wildlife management and human–wildlife interactions. We place an emphasis on scientific research and management case studies that identify and report innovative conservation strategies, technologies, tools, and partnerships that can enhance human–wildlife interactions by mitigating human–wildlife conflicts through direct and indirect management of wildlife and increased stakeholder engagement. Our intent is to promote a dialogue among wildlife professionals and their stakeholders concerning contemporary human–wildlife man-

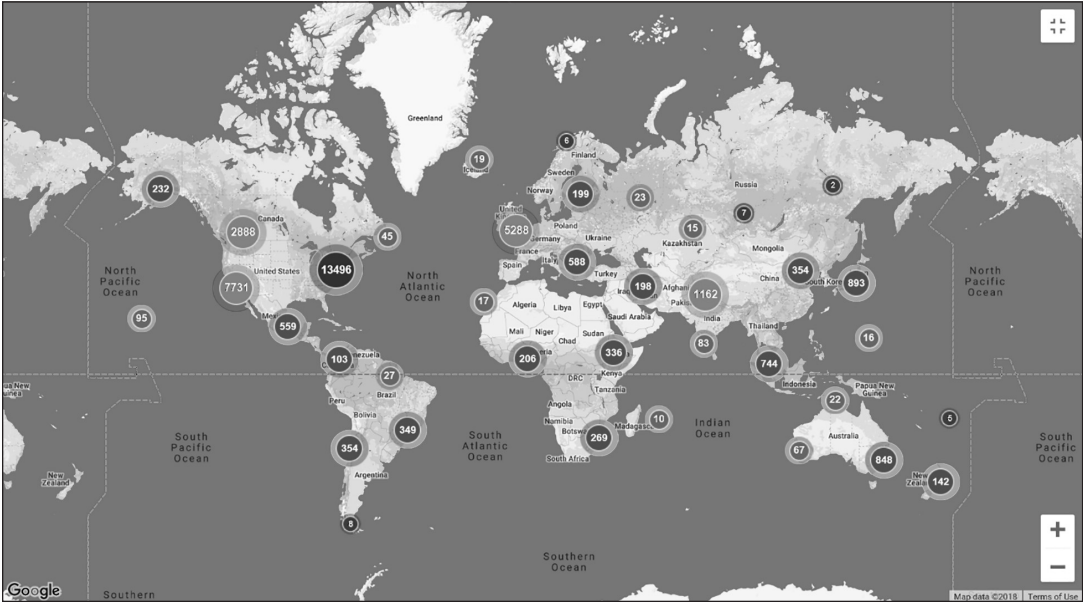
agement issues. In doing so, we hope to provide a permanent repository for human–wildlife conflict management science and case studies that document and share manager experiences and lessons learned with others.

One key metric of this impact is having the ability to track who is reading the journal. Digital Commons provides our authors with immediate feedback regarding who is reading their work. We can now track the number of downloads by manuscript, the location (i.e., county, state, or province) of the download, and the institution by type (i.e., university, government, etc.). However, unlike a direct citation, we cannot tell our authors who cited their publication.

So, what is Digital Commons telling us? In the last 2 years, we have had >40,000 downloads of articles in 174 countries. In the last 90 days alone, >8,000 article downloads occurred from 111 counties (Figure 1). The number of downloads per month continues to increase.

The credit for this exponential increase in the visibility of HWI must clearly go to our authors, our reviewers, and our associate editors. Without our authors' willingness to have their science and experiences vetted through our peer-review process, and our reviewers' and editors' willingness to provide their expertise to provide the peer-review, we would not exist.

There will always remain some uncertainty about how best to manage human–wildlife conflicts. This uncertainty exists not because we lack the management expertise or will, but more so because of public perceptions of the conflict and their acceptance of the



**Figure 1.** In the last 2 years, articles published in *Human–Wildlife Interactions* have had >40,000 downloads in 174 countries (source *Digital Commons*).

management options. However, one thing is certain—for humans and wildlife to coexist in a world where human population growth is increasingly encroaching into wildlife habitats, managers and stakeholders must be willing

to engage in open and frank dialogue where human desires and the needs of wildlife are both considered.

Terry A. Messmer, Editor-in-Chief

# New Associate Editor



**JESSICA TEGT** is the outreach coordinator for the Berryman Institute at Utah State University and specializes in human–wildlife conflicts as well as human dimensions of wildlife. She received her master’s degree in rangeland resources from Utah State University in 2004 and her doctoral degree in wildlife from Mississippi State University in 2011. From 2010–2011, she served as the national outreach coordinator for Berryman Institute East and from 2011–2017, she was an assistant extension professor in human–wildlife conflicts at Mississippi State University (MSU). While at MSU, she developed a conservation education outreach program that served >10,000 students, advised students and taught several courses on human–wildlife conflicts, oversaw research on wild pig management, operated international conferences, helped found the National Wild Pig Task Force, served as the Mississippi Wildlife Chapter President, and conducted a rigorous outreach program including the implementation of the National Training Academy with USDA Wildlife Services.